

From: "L K MILLER" <miller_lk@bellsouth.net>
To: "William Gibbons (wgibbons)" <wgibbons@memphis.edu>
Date: 12/21/2017 11:28:47 AM
Subject: RE: Remarks on removal of Confederate statues

Too little , too late. Process was not transparent. The process to sell the parks was not open and made available to anyone but Greenspace. Worth Morgan verified that on Live at 9 this morning. Has the IRS declared Greenspace a 501 C3? Tried to request this info from the City Council office. They referred me to the Open Records office. Tried to submit a request online but my request will not be accepted unless I upload ID. Do not have a way to do that. Called City Council and a rude lady there transferred me to the Mayor's office. Got voicemail. Left a message but doubt I will hear back. Bureaucratic runaround.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [William Gibbons \(wgibbons\)](#)
Sent: Thursday, December 21, 2017 9:53 AM
To: [Linda Miller](#)
Subject: Fw: Remarks on removal of Confederate statues

FYI.

Bill Gibbons
Executive Director
Public Safety Institute



The University of Memphis
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Memphis, TN 38152
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From: Mayor Jim Strickland <MayorOffice@communications.memphistn.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 20, 2017 10:33 PM
To: William Gibbons (wgibbons)
Subject: Remarks on removal of Confederate statues



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Friends,

A few moments ago, I addressed the media on the removal of the Nathan Bedford Forrest and Jefferson Davis statues in Memphis. In case you missed it, I wanted to make sure you understand what happened, why it happened, and -- most importantly -- where we go from here. So I've adapted my remarks to the media tonight in this letter to you.

It's important to know why we're here: The Forrest statue was placed in 1904, as Jim Crow segregation laws were enacted. The Davis statue was placed in 1964, as the Civil Rights Movement changed our country. The statues no longer represent who we are as a modern, diverse city with momentum. As I told the Tennessee Historical Commission in October, our community wants to reserve places of reverence for those we honor.

Though the spotlight has been bright on this for a few months now, it's worth remembering that this is another step of a years-long journey of which many Memphians have been a part.

Nearly five years ago, when I was on the City Council, we voted unanimously to rename the three parks in our city that were named in honor of the Confederacy. Two years ago, we voted unanimously to remove the Forrest statue.

Later that year, you elected me mayor. And two months after being sworn in, we filed the paperwork to seek a waiver from the Tennessee Heritage Protection Act -- the law that governs statue removal by cities in our state.

The Tennessee Historical Commission denied our waiver in October. The state initiated mediation last month. But it has not been successful. That led us to today's outcome.

It's important to remember what I've said all along: I was committed to remove the statues in a lawful way. From the beginning, we have followed state law -- and tonight's action is no different.

The Historical Commission was not the only legal avenue.

So here's what happened.

In the past few months, our team and the City Council have been laying the groundwork to sell these two parks to a nonprofit. A transaction like this is incredibly complex — and I have to give

Doug McGowen, Bruce McMullen, Jennifer Sink, Allan Wade and our entire team praise here.

Working together, our partners on the City Council passed legislation in early September to enable this sale and allow us to sell parkland to a nonprofit for less than fair market value, which the previous ordinance did not allow.

On Oct. 5, Memphis Greenspace, Inc., a non-profit corporation, filed its incorporation papers with the Tennessee Secretary of State.

And, as you know by now, the City Council authorized me to sell the parks to Memphis Greenspace this afternoon. This was the final step that allowed us to sell the properties.

There are two things you should know as it relates to the law:

1. The law allows a city to sell land to a private entity.
2. The law allows a private entity to remove items such as statues from its own land.

The Council, per our charter, governs parkland. We absolutely could not have done this without their votes and cooperation, and I thank them for their partnership throughout this process.

Van Turner is the chairman of Memphis Greenspace, and I understand he'll be speaking tomorrow about what happened after the sale.

In the days after the August events in Charlottesville, we saw an avalanche of support come together behind our efforts. So it's important that we not forget the sea change that made today a reality: Republicans and Democrats, a unanimous city and county government, Gov. Haslam, scores of diverse members of the clergy, prominent members of the business community, and citizen demonstrators came together to support the same cause.

In all of my life in Memphis, I've never seen such solidarity. To all who have joined the effort: THANK YOU. This day would not have been possible without you.

This particularly means you, Walter Bailey, for first bringing this issue to the forefront decades ago.

That means Allan Wade, for leading these legal battles these last five years. Unfortunately, Allan isn't able to be with us tonight, but I know he's watching — and I'm sure he's relieved!

That means you, Chairman Boyd and members of the council, for your partnership throughout all of this.

That means all of the faith leaders who lead your congregations, for standing up and speaking out. That means all of the business leaders who keep our economy running, for knowing what this means for our growth.

So, that's how we got here.

But this day should be much more about *where we go from here*.

So I want you to hear me loud and clear: Though some of our city's past is painful, we are all in charge of our city's future. Black and white, young and old — every single one of us.

That's the symbolism for which I want this day to be remembered.

We're on the cusp of an important year for our city. In a little more than three months, as April 4 approaches, people from across the world will come to Memphis to commemorate the 50th year since Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was killed.

Beyond that, we also know that in two years, in 2019, Memphians will gather to celebrate our bicentennial. We will come together to celebrate a city whose originality and creativity have changed the world — and continue to change it.

So here's the challenge I leave you with today: That we carry this same spirit of solidarity to cast the Memphis we want for our next hundred years.

Because while these statues are gone, our challenges remain.

Tonight, almost half of our children will go to bed in a home that's below the poverty line. Tonight, too many of our residents in too many neighborhoods won't feel safe in their own homes.

These facts did not change today.

But they are the sobering realities that led me to run for this office. And they are the hard facts that dictate everything we do, every single day, at City Hall.

They are also the hard facts that should dictate everything that's done, every single day, outside of City Hall, too.

So if you've spoken up on the statues the past few months, no matter which side, I issue this challenge: Take that energy and apply it to the hard challenges our residents face every single day. Volunteer to be on the front lines. Mentor a child to make a 1-on-1 impact on a life. Help teach a kid to read.

Don't just talk about it -- take action in improving the quality of life in every home, on every block, in every single neighborhood of this great city.

That's the work Memphians have entrusted to us, and I'm determined to not let them down.

This is an important moment in the life of our city. People from all walks of life came together to make today a reality. Let us move forward from this moment committed more than ever to a united and determined Memphis.

Today showed us just how successful we can be when that happens.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name "Eric" written in a stylized, cursive script.

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